

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (previously presented): A utilization control system for limiting access by the operator of a vehicle to programmable computer having ports for delivering output signals to communications devices mounted on said vehicle comprising:

at least one vehicle motion condition detector providing signals indicative of current motion of said vehicle and of potential motion of said vehicle;

at least one signal processor responsive to signals provided by said at least one detector indicative of vehicle motion and potential vehicle motion to generate blanking signals;

at least one vehicle mounted communications device; and

at least one blanking device associated with said signal processor and said communications device responsive to said blanking signals and configured to shut down output from the computer ports to said communications device to prevent utilization or interaction with said at least one communications device by said vehicle operator.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The system of Claim 1 wherein said at least one motion condition detector comprises a transmission park/neutral switch.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The system of Claim 1 wherein said at least one signal processor comprises a programmable digital signal processor configured to deliver outputs to temporarily block device outputs that may be dangerously distracting to the vehicle operator at that time.

Claim 4 (original): The system of Claim 3 wherein said programmable digital signal processor is a "PC" type computer.

Claim 5 (original): The system of Claim 4 wherein said "PC" computer includes an output monitor and an input keyboard.

Claims 6-7 (canceled)

Claim 8 (previously presented): The system of Claim 1 wherein said at least one motion condition detector comprises an accelerometer.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The system of Claim 5 wherein said at least one motion condition detector comprises a transmission park/neutral switch.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The system of Claim 1 wherein said at least one motion condition detector comprises an antilock brake system.

Claim 11 (previously presented): The system of Claim 1 wherein said at least one motion condition detector comprises an electrical speedometer.

Claim 12 (previously presented): A utilization control system for limiting access by the operator of the vehicle to communications devices mounted on said vehicle comprising:

- a vehicle motion condition detector providing signals indicative of current motion of said vehicle and of potential motion of said vehicle said detector comprising a transmission park/neutral switch;

- a programmable digital computer used as a communication device on board said vehicle; and

- an optical isolater circuit in the signal path between said vehicle motion condition detector and said programmable digital computer, said computer being programmed to be responsive to said signals indicative of motion and of potential motion to generate blanking signals applied to said digital computer and limiting said operator's utilization of said computer.

Claim 13 (original): The system of Claim 12 wherein said blanking signals are additionally applied to others of said communication devices mounted on said vehicle.

Claim 14 (original): The system of Claim 13 wherein said others of said communications devices include voice communications devices.

Claim 15 (original): The system of Claim 13 wherein said others of said communications devices include visual communications devices.

Claim 16 (original): The system of Claim 1 further comprising an optical isolater circuit in the signal path between said at least one vehicle motion condition detector and said at least one signal processor.

Claim 17 (canceled)

Claim 18 (previously presented): The system of Claim 1, wherein the at least one signal processor is external to the at least one vehicle mounted communications device.

Claim 19 (currently amended): A method, executed by a computer, comprising:

detecting a vehicle motion condition of a vehicle, wherein the vehicle motion condition indicates whether it is possible for the vehicle to be currently in motion; and

in response to the vehicle motion condition indicating that it is possible for the vehicle to be currently in motion, disabling communications through at least one port of the computer with at least one peripheral device associated with the computer so as to prevent interaction of the computer with a user of the computer.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The method of Claim 19, wherein the vehicle motion condition is detected through a sensor configured to communicate with the computer.

Claim 21 (previously presented): The method of Claim 20, wherein the sensor senses a status of a transmission park/neutral switch associated with the vehicle.

Claim 22 (previously presented): The method of Claim 20, further comprising:

determining whether the sensor can currently communicate with the computer; and

in response to a determination that the sensor cannot currently communicate with the computer, disabling the at least one peripheral device.

Claim 23 (previously presented): The method of claim 20, wherein the sensor senses actual movement of the vehicle.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The method of claim 19, wherein the at least one peripheral device includes a user input device.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The method of claim 19, wherein the at least one peripheral device includes an output device.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The system of Claim 12, wherein the blanking signals inhibit user input to the digital computer.